

# CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

## New Teachers

PAGE 4

FCPS hires educator Catherine Coulter of Burke through its teacher residency program; she will teach fifth grade at Fairview Elementary in Fairfax Station.

## Whistle Stop Mystery

PAGE 3

## Church Donates Land for Affordable Housing

PAGE 6

## Trek Bikes Opens

PAGE 5

OPINION, PAGE 8 ♦ CALENDAR, PAGE 9

PHOTO BY FCPS PHOTOGRAPHER DONNIE BIGGS



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# NEWS

## Building Ruins Near Franconia: Old Whistle Stop?

Possible track bed, discarded railroad ties, Bob's Bridge are part of the mystery near Long Branch.

By Mike Salmon  
THE CONNECTION

In the thick woods off Beulah Street in Lee District, in the area where the Cinder Bed Bikeway is planned, there are remnants of an old building that some say was a railroad station to an old railroad line that ran along Long Branch in 1872. There aren't many signs of the train except this half-standing brick wall and some trees aligned in a straight path off the end of Cinder Bed Road that may have lined the railroad tracks.

It turns out there was a whole line of passenger stops all along that area at one time, called "whistle stops;" people waiting for the train had to wave it down with a flag to make sure it stopped.



"Bob's Bridge," is a foot bridge out in the dense woods off Beulah Street.



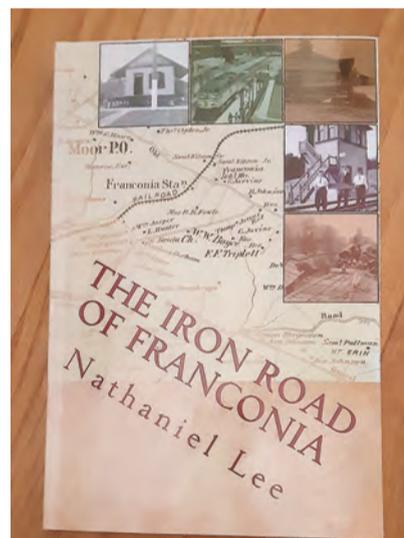
Nathaniel Lee, author of "The Iron Road of Franconia."



On the map at the Franconia Museum, the structure in the woods is a 1937 house.



The old brick and mortar were the only way at one time.



Nathaniel Lee, author of "The Iron Road of Franconia."

### Honing Historical Knowledge

Nathaniel Lee is a local history expert who grew up in the Franconia area and honed his historical knowledge with old fashioned footwork. He has communicated with the folks in the RF&P railroad group, and traveled to Richmond to research the rail map in the Franconia Museum. The map "nails down exactly where stuff is," he said, and noted the lore that flies around the museum sometimes.

"This allows us to put some of the old stories to rest," Lee said. He spent some time digging around the station locations and found concrete block in a few places, thought to be the foundations of past whistle stops.

"If the engineer sees the flag, they'll stop," said Nathaniel Lee, a local rail expert and author of "The Iron Road of Franconia," which is available in the Franconia Museum.

From where the current railroad goes under the Capital Beltway in Franconia, there were a series of whistle stop train stations all the way down to Lorton. This was in the 1872 timeframe when the train was the best way to get into the City of Alexandria and Washington, D.C. This lasted until about 1971 when Amtrak took over the rail lines, Lee said.

Along this stretch, there were whistle stops at the Franconia Station, the Windsor Stop, the Ravensworth Stop, the Long Branch- Accotink- Newington Station, the Accotink- Pohick Station, Telegraph Road-Lorton Station and the Colchester Stop. The Windsor Stop was near an African-American community, where the Ford and Walker families lived, and the train was a good way to get to schools in Alexandria.

#### Bob's Bridge

An individual named "Bob" is involved with the train mystery, and that's Bob Brennis, a resident of Amberleigh who investigated the train for a story in a now-defunct Beulah newsletter. Brennis noted the station, and a parallel line of trees and some railroad ties. He notes that the train ran on Cinder Bed Road, and the path may have been the actual "cinderbed," the road is named for.



Nathaniel Lee points to one of the maps where the whistle stops are labeled.

"It's only when you enter the woods, do you realize the old railroad line extends into the woods from the end of Cinder Bed Road," he wrote.

This was in the 1872 time-frame, and the railroad was moved to its present location about a quarter mile to the west in the 1904-1910 timeframe, so it possibly operated on the Cinder Bed Road area for about 30 years. The train ran right where the road is now, Lee said. All of this is on a map in the museum that Lee helped create.

#### Aerial Photos

There is some indication of a possible rail line or road leading up to a structure in this

area on the Historic Fairfax County Aerial files which can be accessed on the internet. In the aerial image from 1937, right downhill from current-day Amberleigh neighborhood, a road or rail bed can be seen and two structures on the east side of Long Branch. The stream is the only thing that is basically in the same place as in 1937 when the aerial images were taken, and the Amberleigh neighborhood is superimposed on top for viewer comparison purposes.

The remnant of this structure still stands, but Lee said it was a house that dates back to the whistle stop days. It is on his map as well as another house about a half mile north, closer to the creek.

# FCPS Gets Creative to Fill Teacher Vacancies

## New teacher residency program.

MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The twinkle is back in the eyes of newly hired educator Catherine Coulter of Burke, thanks to the recently launched Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) teacher residency program. People, such as Coulter, who has a master's degree in education and years of out-of-state teaching experience, can begin teaching in FCPS while completing licensure in Virginia.

Candidates are required to have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and a commitment to meet minimum qualifications to be eligible for a Virginia Board of Education license within the first year of employment.

The residency program may have provided Coulter with something more vital to her being. The program's support and respect for her expertise and experience have rekindled Coulter's passion for teaching and may have prevented her from joining the record number of educators who are leaving the profession.

Coulter and Fairfax public schools Media Relations Specialist Kathleen Miller answered some questions about the county's program. Coulter was one of the first hires by the school district under the program. "We are just gearing up," Miller said.

Coulter attended White Oaks Elementary

School in Burke and graduated from Lake Braddock Secondary School. Six years ago, she accepted her first teaching position in Louisiana, where she was certified to teach sixth through twelfth grade. Three years later, Coulter moved back to Northern Virginia in late summer. She accepted a teaching position in the District of Columbia, where she stayed until this summer.

"Each time I've made the switch, it has been because I've been almost at that point where I knew I needed to make a change or I might not be a teacher anymore," Coulter said. Although she desired to teach for Fairfax County Public Schools, she hesitated to apply until a friend informed her about the residency program.

"Virginia has so many requirements," Coulter said. "I didn't know if I had time to get it all done. I had a 15-minute conversation with someone from human resources who laid out how simple the process was."

Coulter submitted her application for the position of fifth-grade teacher at Fairview Elementary in Fairfax Station. Coulter said she had two requirements to fulfill for licensure in Virginia. The first step was to take and pass the English, mathematics, science, and social studies Praxis 5001 exams for elementary education. The Virginia State Board of Education establishes testing requirements



PHOTO BY FCPS PHOTOGRAPHER DONNIE BIGGS  
FCPS hires educator Catherine Coulter of Burke through its teacher residency program.

Coulter said she finally feels like she is coming home. As an educator, she is open to feedback. "I want to be the best teacher possible. ... This is special. I think I do have a twinkle in my eye again. I'm excited to start and haven't felt that in a long time. Fairfax County has so many great resources, and excellent leaders, who I know will support me throughout this journey."

Stepping back from teaching is not an easy decision. Many teachers wonder if it is worth continuing because of the long hours, the lack of support, and the emotional disconnection. Whether part of the Great Resignation or Great Reprioritization, professional distress for educators is a concern.

"Educators are leaving in record numbers," the National Education Association stated. On June 8, 2022, NEA President Becky Pringle testified at a hearing held by the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, saying, "Educators are leaving the best profession in the world in droves...driven out by the pandemic, book bans, and the lack of respect for their expertise and experience."

On Saturday, Aug. 13, the online FCPS Instructional Vacancy List at <https://careers.fcps.edu/vl/vacancy.htm> numbered 261 teacher vacancy positions across all grade levels, in addition to other positions for instructional assistants, counselors, public health attendants and public health training assistants.

and minimum passing scores. "I passed all those," she said. Next, Coulter needed to take a 4-week online class on elementary instructional practices. The course begins on Aug. 23; the first day of school in FCPS for students is Aug. 22.

Late last week, Coulter said she had the opportunity to begin moving supplies into her 5th-grade classroom at Fairview Elementary in Fairfax Station. Asked what she would hang first, Coulter said, "I like Star Wars, and I have a big Baby Yoda poster that says 'READ' on it. He's holding a book; I've had that poster in my last couple of classrooms. It's something I carry with me everywhere."

After two different school districts,

# New FCPS Superintendent Speaks to Businesses

BY HOLLY DOUGHERTY  
MOUNT VERNON LEE CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE

New FCPS Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid spoke to the Mount Vernon Lee Chamber of Commerce last Thursday in her first public engagement outside of the schools.

Introducing Reid was Mount Vernon School Board Representative Karen Corbett Sanders. In her introduction, Corbett Sanders talked about the strategic investments being made in renovating local buildings.

She also mentioned schools with new principals for the 2022-23 school year including Bucknell Elementary School, Riverside Elementary School, and Lorton Station Elementary School.

"Fairfax County's strategic imperative is to have a strong school system that addresses the needs of the all," Corbett-Sanders said. She said 2022 graduating seniors at Mount Vernon High School received \$20 million in scholarships and are going "to the best schools."

Dr. Michelle Reid began her pre-



Alison Ross, Chamber Chairman; Rodney Lusk, Franconia Supervisor; Dr. Michelle Reid, FCPS Superintendent; Karen Corbett-Sanders, FCPS School Board.

sentation by saying that Fairfax County Public Schools is one of the largest and most revered districts in the country and her goal is to "help the hopes and dreams of each child be realized."

"Education is about the trajec-

tory of a student's life," Reid said. "Education will often determine what opportunities are available in their future." She also said that math skills determine 84% of a child's future education.

Showing various charts of data



Alison Ross, Chamber Chairman, welcomed new Chamber members; James Heo, Cox Communications; Sarah Jernigan, RLAH Real Estate; and Yibeli Galindo-Baird, Fort Belvoir MWR.

from 2008-2016, Reid said that children today are different than they were 15 years ago. There are fewer teenagers with jobs, a driver's license, or who have dated. These trends indicate youth are having fewer social interactions and such trends are a challenge for schools.

During the discussion, Supervisor Rodney Lusk emphasized the

need for schools to teach students to be innovative and entrepreneurial.

Reid will begin a strategic planning process for FCPS to re-imagine education in Fairfax County. The objective will be to decide what the community wants schools of the future to look like and what should be measured.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

About to cut the ribbon are (from left) Economic Development Authority Commissioner Jeff Herman, Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jennifer Rose, Chamber Board Chairman Doug Church, City Council members Tom Ross and So Lim, Mayor David Meyer, Trek's Alec Penn, Council member Sang Yi, Chamber member Russ McIntosh, and Trek's Tyler Castaneda.

## Trek Bicycle Opens in Fairfax City

**'We want to continue to grow the biking community.'**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City has a new bicycle store in a place already familiar to local, biking enthusiasts. Called Trek Bicycle, it's in the building that formerly housed Spokes, in the City's Kamp Washington area.

The address is 10937 Fairfax Blvd., (near the Dunkin' Donuts). The store held its official ribbon-cutting on July 8, with City dignitaries and Chamber of Commerce members participating in the festivities.

"Our City is known for its active lifestyle," said Assistant Economic Development Director Danette Nguyen. "And we know our residents will be happy, welcoming customers of this new store."

Trek began in Wisconsin in 1976 and currently has 240 stores nationwide, including 15 in Virginia – 10 of them in Northern Virginia. It offers a wide variety of bikes and associated products, plus bicycle service and tune-ups.

"We all grew up with bikes, and now, people are rediscovering the joys of bike-riding for pleasure and recreation," said Fairfax Mayor David Meyer. "This is an important location at the intersection of two major highways [Route 50 East and Lee Highway/Fairfax Boulevard]." Then, directly addressing Trek Bicycle's staff, he said, "You bring great products to the City, and we're glad to have you here."

Noting that he's been biking since age 10 or 11, Councilmember Tom Ross said he still enjoys doing it. "When I was with the National Park Service, I promot-

ed biking and bike trails," he said. "And it's not just for recreation, but also for transportation, and we promote biking in this City." He said Trek was involved in Fairfax's recent Bike-to-Work Day, doing minor repairs and pumping up tires for the participants. So, added Ross, "I look forward to being in here many more times in the future."

"Going from Spokes to Trek, we have more resources to help the community," said Store Manager Alec Penn. "And I just hope to make the world and this community a better place."

Trek Bicycle was able to open in this particular spot because the former owner of the Spokes store was retiring. Besides, explained Trek District Manager Alex Bartholomew, "We realized that Fairfax is an important area for bikes, and we didn't want to see the store close. And we wanted to continue to grow the biking community in this area."

He said Trek Bicycle is the place to come "for all levels of bike expertise. And we service all makes and models of bicycles – it doesn't have to be a Trek. We do all kinds of repairs, large and small. And the bikes we sell include kids' bikes for 3-year-olds, up to \$10,000 racing bikes, and everything in between – even off-road, hybrid bikes for roads, as well as trails with rocks and roots."

Bartholomew said they're also happy to be here because many of the employees have ties to Fairfax. "I graduated from Woodson High School, and several others are also local members of the community," he said. "We're excited to take care of people in this community, and we'll do an excellent job, no matter what the ask is."

**"It's not just for recreation, but also for transportation, and we promote biking in this City."**

— Councilmember Tom Ross

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A diagram of the 10 new townhouses.



Drawing of the phase two parking spaces and drive aisle (along the right).

# Church To Donate Land for Affordable Housing

Fairfax City Council hears church's proposal for affordable housing.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Like most cities and towns across the nation, Fairfax City needs more low-cost, affordable housing. So Fairfax Presbyterian Church is offering to donate some of its land so affordable homes may be built on it.

"Since we were founded 68 years ago, we've tried to always have the City's welfare at heart," said the Rev. Henry Brinton, the church's pastor since 2001. "The lack of housing drives so many problems, and we're excited to increase the City's stock of affordable housing – which is sorely needed."

The church first proposed the idea in 2018; since then, it's discussed it in 2019, 2021 and again this summer with the Fairfax City Council and Planning Commission. The City's senior planner, Albert Frederick, presented the latest details during a recent Council work session.

Originally built around 1960, this church at 10723 Main St. and Presbyterian Way is now partnering with two other entities on the project, called Glebe View Townhouses. Fairfax Presbyterian is the applicant. Habitat (for Humanity) NOVA is the developer, and nonprofit Homestretch/Sacred Homes would own two of the houses.

The church would continue operating, as usual, but would donate about 1.6 acres of its property for the construction of 10 three-level townhouses, each having three bedrooms and two bathrooms. They'd have rear, one-car garages, plus another parking space on their driveways, and would be built in two rows of five townhouses.

"The townhouses would be about 40 feet high, and 10 visitor parking spaces are proposed on the western side of the property," said Frederick. "In addition, a new parking area is proposed in the southwest corner of the site for the church's use. It would contain 38 parking spaces, including handicap-accessible spaces."

He said the project would have 54 percent open space, including a walking path around the 8.25-acre church property. "And there'd be two stormwater-management facilities where today there are none," said Frederick. "The Planning Commission was supportive of the development, overall, but wanted pedestrian improvements and for the additional parking to be reconsidered."

Phase one would be construction of the townhouses and their associated infrastructure, plus the utilities, stormwater-management facilities, open space and recreation facilities needed for the second phase. Phase two is planned for the construction of the 38 parking spaces and a 23-foot-long drive aisle on the west side of the existing church.

To do all this work, the project requires a land rezoning from its current RH (Residential High) to PD-M (Planned Development-Mixed Use). And besides enabling families in need to have homes, it would also benefit the environment.

To promote energy conservation and green building techniques, and help keep utilities bills low, the builder would incorporate energy-efficient construction practices, appliances and lighting – including rooftop solar panels for all the townhouses. The new brick-exterior homes would meet the Earth-Craft certification standard.

The open-space, communal green area in the front yard of all 10 townhouses would include a pergola, solar pathway lights, benches and landscaping. And according to the staff report, "Should the City approve this application, the solar-powered, affordable townhouses will set an innovative example for future solar power initiatives."

The townhomes would be built on the east side of the property, adjacent to the Cameron Glen townhouse community. A sidewalk with steps would be added to connect the church with the Autumn Woods community. And a connection on the north side of the townhouses to the adjacent, existing trail by Accotink Creek would also be added.



This map shows the site's proximity to Presbyterian Way, Main Street and Cameron Glen.



Site plan illustrating the locations of the new townhouses and church parking lot.

Eight of the units would be sold to income-eligible, Habitat NOVA families earning less than the area median income (AMI). The other two would be sold to Homestretch for its Sacred Homes program. All Habitat NOVA homeowners put in more than 400 hours, working alongside other volunteers, to help build their homes.

Habitat NOVA would work with third-party lenders to provide the prospective homeowners with affordable, 30-year mortgages. The homes' sale prices would be below market value because the church is providing the land. If and when the homeowners need to sell their homes, they must sell to another income-eligible family meeting the income requirements at the time of sale.

Homestretch's mission is to empower homeless families with children to attain permanent housing and become self-sufficient. Its Sacred Homes program connects faith communities directly to individual families working to propel themselves out of poverty. The faith community "adopts" a Homestretch home and assists the resident family on its journey to self-sufficiency. And Fairfax Presbyterian has agreed to join other, current, Sacred Homes nonprofit partners to help and sponsor two eligible families.

At its June meeting, the Planning Commission wondered if the plan would contain traffic-calming techniques, plus pedestrian facilities including a boardwalk on the western side and lighting for Presbyterian Way. It was also concerned that a large number of trees would be chopped down to make way for the additional church parking lot.

City staff noted, as well, that the project proposes to "relocate the existing stairs connecting to the existing, asphalt trail on Love's Outlet Road on the west side of site. However, the applicant has not provided sidewalks to Main Street." And during its recent work session, City Council members asked Frederick about these and other issues.

"How will pedestrians get from Presbyterian Way to the townhomes?" asked Councilmember Janice Miller. "Are there any markings or traffic-calming devices planned?" Public Works Director David Summers replied that the City's trail improvements to be done in the fall might solve this problem.

"And will the townhome residents be able to use the church site's recreation amenities?" asked Miller. Frederick said this matter, as well as the other issues raised by her and the Planning Commission, are being examined.

SEE AFFORDABLE HOUSING, PAGE 8  
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Before removal efforts at Burke Lake, water chestnuts are seen in large and small patches on the lake surface. After water chestnut removal, native plants, water fowl and fish enjoy a better environment on area ponds and lakes.

# Continuing War on Water Chestnuts

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County's Invasive Management Area team recently organized an effort, on Aug. 17 to remove invasive water chestnut plants from the waters of Accotink Lake Park. The group's manager, Patricia Greenberg, recruited park staff and volunteers to tackle the plant. The plant is easy to remove, although the work is muddy, with kayaks and waders, old shoes and tee shirts employed against the mud.



The beauty of Lake Accotink Park is threatened if invasive Water Chestnuts (*Trapa bispinosa*), in foreground with Purple Loosestrife (*Lithium salicaria*), get a foot hold in the lake's water

Water chestnuts grow in dense, unsightly mats and impact the functionality and aesthetics of ponds and lakes. As with other invasive species, its growth, unrestricted by any native limiters, can block out native plants on which native wildlife depends. Accotink Lake is one of 33 or more locations where water chestnuts have been found in northern Virginia. Removing the plant before it gets a foothold helps to halt its spread; prevent fish kills due to restricted oxygen levels; and prevent painful injuries to people and animals walking in the water near the shore.

Greenburg advises, "Since Lake Accotink feeds into Pohick Bay and Gunston Cove at the Potomac, it's imperative we do our best at Lake Accotink." (For more information on Water Chestnut and local control efforts, see Springfield Connection, July 27)

Recently, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR), Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) employees, and volunteers met at [www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

Burke Lake Park on July 25 and August 2 to remove the non-native Water Chestnut (*Trapa bispinosa*) plants found growing in the park's State managed lake. Over the two day period, they harvested an estimated 21,700 pounds of the invasive water plants. Plants were easily removed by hand-pulling from kayaks or by wading from shore. The removed plant material was left in piles to decompose in the park, away from the shoreline, adding nutrients to the soil, but leaving the nuts unable to stimulate growth away from their water environment. Even with the large amount of plant material removed, DWR biologist John Odenkirk estimates a removal effort will be needed again next year, for amounts hopefully more than halved by this year's removal efforts.

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## The Inflation Reduction Act Fights Climate Crisis and More

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK



The Inflation Reduction Act passed by Congress last week and awaiting President Biden's signature will lower healthcare costs, combat climate change, and raise taxes on the largest corporations. The bill is a big win for American families, seniors, and workers; it makes historic strides when it comes to nationally addressing the worsening climate crisis. It directly targets two of the biggest drivers of inflation: health care costs and energy prices.

Let's start with what it does for the planet. The Inflation Reduction Act is the largest bill ever passed to address climate change. It invests \$369 billion to cut climate emissions 40% by 2030 and promotes climate justice. And for American families' energy budgets, the Inflation Reduction Act will help reduce our energy bills by \$500-\$1000 per year when all of its programs are implemented. Disadvantaged communities also benefit, with \$60 billion allocated towards climate justice and pollution clean-up. The bill allotted \$4.5 billion towards rebates of up to 100% for low-income families to purchase energy-efficient appliances, including dryers, water heaters, and stoves. The green economy also benefits through various tax credits intended to lower the cost of renewable electricity investment and production. These credits should speed up the adoption of zero-emission trucks and vans, will produce more air capture technology to remove carbon pollution from the atmosphere, will promote green hydrogen, and incentivize

the reduction of emissions in commercial buildings. It even supports electric vehicle purchases for the Postal Service. This Act strongly fights climate change and is a solid step in the battle for net zero emissions, and at the same time, provides more green, union job opportunities boosting domestic production of clean energy.

The Inflation Reduction Act also helps with family healthcare expenses, especially by capping out-of-pocket spending for prescription drugs at \$2,000 per year for Medicare recipients. Moreover, the IRA extends Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies through 2025 preventing 3 million people from becoming uninsured. Indeed, this issue moved me to write a letter to our Senators on July 11th urging them to convince their colleagues to pass this healthcare extension. My goal was to provide them the tangible support of a state representative close to the ground who represents thousands of Virginians soon to be affected by a big jump in healthcare premiums otherwise.

And there is more! Under the Inflation Reduction Act, the government can negotiate directly with drug companies to lower prices for medications and save Medicare billions of dollars. In the past, Medicare was forced to accept the prices given by distributors, which then elevated the prices paid by those in need of medicine. Medicare will save \$265 billion with these lowered prices, which in turn helps to fund other parts of this legislation. The other big win for families is that the act limits the monthly cost of insulin to \$35 for Medicare partners. Unfortunately, due to Republican parliamentary efforts, this won't

apply to patients who are privately insured.

The bill is further funded by new taxes, which aim to ensure the wealthy pay their fair share. One of these provisions is a 15% minimum tax on the book income (the income a corporation tells its shareholders) of large corporations (those with over \$1 billion in annual profit). This tax is anticipated to generate \$222 billion for the government in the next 10 years, and further funds the bill. Additional funds for the IRS will prevent high-income taxpayers from dodging their fair share in taxes. A 1% Stock Buyback Fee will further prevent corporations from avoiding taxes on their profits and will generate an additional \$74 billion in revenue for the IRS. The days of 100% corporate tax write-offs will finally come to an end.

The White House predicts "downward pressure on inflation by reducing the government's budget deficit by an estimated \$300 billion over the next decade." The idea is that reduced government spending and higher taxes will help to shrink the deficit and allow companies to keep their prices low.

The Inflation Reduction Act is truly a monumental step toward reducing the high prices Americans are facing today, and lowering the strain of the environmental crisis for the generations to come. The dream of a major cut to emissions by 2030 has now become a reality, and this bill is a critical step forward in fighting climate change and saving our beautiful planet, all the while helping American families by lowering health care and energy costs. A large amount of gratitude must go to our two Senators, Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, and to our Congressman Don Beyer, for their hard work to make this historic legislation come to fruition.

## Church's Proposal for Affordable Housing

FROM PAGE 6

"Could the trail be routed to access Main Street?" wondered Councilmember Tom Ross. "If so, it could be a safe way in and out of that property." He, too, was concerned about the need for the additional 38 parking spaces and their possible impact on the adjacent Autumn Woods neighborhood. And Councilmember Joe Harmon was also unhappy about the removal of mature trees for construction of that parking lot.

Councilmember Sang Yi said the City's AMI, and not Fairfax County's, should be used during assessment of potential homeowners' eligibility, since the City's is lower. Noting that only two of the 10 units would be rentals, he asked if Fairfax City has enough townhouses for rent.

Furthermore, said Yi, "I urge

the applicant to save as many of the 189 trees [slated for removal] as possible." And he wanted to know if the church would still have enough parking after donating part of it for this project.

"I encourage the staff and applicant to reflect on these comments, plus the Planning Commission's concerns," said Mayor David Meyer. "I believe all these things are solvable and there's a path forward to yes."

"The enthusiasm for this project is tremendous, and it's part of the fabric of the life of the church and the work we've always tried to do to improve our community," added Pastor Brinton. "There's no perfect, affordable-housing project. Do not allow the perfect to become the enemy of the good. Glebe View is the good that we can achieve together."

Next, representing both the

church and Habitat NOVA, attorney David Houston took the podium to answer questions. Regarding Love's Outlet, he said, "The issue is who owns it. It's 20 feet wide and

1,000 feet long and leads to Main Street. We always assumed it's a public road. The cost of a side-

SEE PLUM, PAGE 10

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# CALENDAR

## REGISTRATION OPEN

2022 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics. Sept. 10-24. Register online by Aug. 31 at [www.nvso.us](http://www.nvso.us), \$20 for unlimited events. Go to the website for events, rules, eligibility, photos, past results. For information, email [nvso1982@gmail.com](mailto:nvso1982@gmail.com).

## NOW THRU AUG. 27

Summer Saturdays. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road Lorton. Explore history in different ways with this drop-in summer program. Each Saturday will have a host of different activities around a different theme. Savor history, dig in the dirt, and play games as we learn about the 18th century at Gunston Hall. Visit the website: <https://gunstonhall.org/events/summer-saturdays-2/>

## NOW THRU OCT. 17

Hummingbird Photo Exhibition. At Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria. For those who can't get enough of the beauty of hummingbirds, a group of local photographers are mounting an exhibition this summer at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria. The title of the show is "A Bouquet of Hummingbirds," and it will feature works from more than 20 area artists and include hummingbirds from all over the Western Hemisphere. All profits from the sale of photos will be donated to the Friends of Green Spring, a non-profit organization devoted to maintaining the gardens and furthering public education and outreach. At the Historic House at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria,

## FILMS IN THE PARK

Thursdays at 7 p.m. At the Mosaic District's Strawberry Park, 2910 District Ave., Fairfax. Aug 18 – Under the Stadium Lights  
Aug 25 – F9 | The Fast & Furious Saga

## AUG. 1-31

Point 50 Story Walk. 10 a.m.-10 p.m. At Point 50 Shopping Center, 10334 Fairfax Blvd., Fairfax. A StoryWalk is a free interactive way for students to combine physical activity and literacy while reading a book. Beginning Monday, August 1 through Wednesday, August 31, families can walk through Point 50 and read "Nugget and Fang Go to School" by Tammi Sauer and Michael Slack. The book was chosen to get children excited about returning to school, support the City of Fairfax Regional Library summer reading theme of Oceans of Possibilities, and create engagement opportunities with Fairfax City's business community. Visit the website: <http://fairfaxcityconnected.com/storywalk22>

## NOW THRU AUG. 21

Discover Occoquan. Celebrate Occoquan town businesses with more than a week of activities including a Scavenger Hunt, Taste of Occoquan, a Sip & Stroll, plus, Trivia Night, the famous Duck Splash, a corn hole tournament, a concert, and more! Visitors are invited to browse the town's unique shops, boutiques, galleries, and eateries and participate in their special activities, including demonstrations, workshops, and sales to discover all that Occoquan has to offer. <https://www.visitoccoquanva.com/discover>

## THURSDAY/AUG. 18

Ruthie & the Wranglers. 5 to 7:30 p.m. At Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. After 25 years of twang (including recording, touring



Discover Occoquan from Aug. 13-21, 2022 in the Town of Occoquan.



PHOTO BY JANE GAMBLE

"A Bouquet of Hummingbirds," features works from more than 20 area artists and includes hummingbirds from all over the Western Hemisphere. Through Oct. 17, 2022, free to the public, at the Historic House at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria.

and Americana/roots radio airplay), the band remains a cornerstone of the D.C. roots music scene. You can also partake in wine tastings and sales by the Winery at Bull Run and Paradise Springs Winery. Concerts are held outdoors and may be canceled due to inclement weather. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

## THURSDAY/AUG. 18

History Book Talk. 7-8 p.m. At National Museum of the United States Army, 1775 Liberty Drive, Fort Belvoir. In this major new history of the Continental Army's Grand Forage of 1778,

award-winning military historian Ricardo Herrera uncovers what daily life was like for Soldiers during the darkest and coldest days of the American Revolution: the Valley Forge winter. This event is virtual only; to register for this program, click the link: <https://tickets.thenmusa.org/Policies.aspx>

## AUG. 19-SEPT. 5

Circus Vazquez. At Potomac Mills, 2700 Potomac Mills Circle, Woodbridge. See unforgettable one-of-a-kind performances by an international all-human cast of circus superstars in an exciting all-new 2022 show. Led by

Ringmaster Memo Vazquez, Circus Vazquez presents an awe-inspiring, death-defying, hilarious and affordable circus experience for Virginia area audiences. Show times are 7:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays; 12 p.m., 3 p.m., 7 p.m. on Saturdays; 12 p.m., 3 p.m., 6 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets start at \$25 and are available now at [www.CircusVazquez.com](http://www.CircusVazquez.com).

## FRIDAY/AUG. 19

Plunkey and Oneness. 7:30 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, W16 Rizer Pavilion, Lorton. An experienced performer, songwriter, music and film producer, Plunkey has appeared in concert with some of the biggest names in Black music, including Patti Labelle, Ray Charles, Earth Wind & Fire, Yellow Jackets, Frankie Beverly & Maze, LL Cool J, Chuck Brown, and more. Visit [workhousearts.org/onstage](http://workhousearts.org/onstage).

## SUNDAY/AUG. 21

Terra Voce. 2 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, W16 McGuire Woods Gallery, Lorton. Thrilling audiences with lively concert programs that explore a colorful array of musical styles from Baroque to tango, Brazilian choro and European folk. Known for performances that combine the diverse and unexpected, Terra Voce connects with their listeners through music that surprises, uplifts, and inspires curiosity. Visit [workhousearts.org/onstage](http://workhousearts.org/onstage).

## SUNDAY/AUG. 21

N Gauge Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK members will be running N Gauge model trains at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5 (\$6 special events); seniors and military, active and retired, \$4. [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org), [www.facebook.com/FFXSRR](http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR), 703-425-9225.

## WEDNESDAY/AUG. 24

Free Concerts in the Park. 7 p.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Mark your calendars and plan to come out to Burke Lake Park every Wednesday night starting July 13 through August 24 for an incredible line-up of bands, food trucks, 2 Silos beer, and Peterson's Ice Cream. The atmosphere is informal, so bring a blanket and lawn chairs, and relax with friends and family.  
Aug. 24 – The Colin Thompson Band (Blues Rock)

## SUNDAY/AUG. 28

Burke Historical Society. 3-4 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Ann Shields returns to speak in more detail on her extensive research into P.O. Box 1142, the top-secret military intelligence camp at Fort Hunt, Alexandria, during the Second World War.

## AUG. 29-SEPT. 4

Fairfax City Restaurant Week. During the week-long event, over 20 participating restaurants will offer three-course prix fixe menus of \$20 for lunch/brunch and \$35 for dinner per person with couple and family meal options available. In addition to the curated menus, specialty restaurants will offer a Two for \$10 Deal providing food lovers the opportunity to further explore Fairfax City's regionally lauded diverse culinary scene. Visit [www.FairfaxCityRestaurantWeek.com](http://www.FairfaxCityRestaurantWeek.com).

## BULLETIN BOARD

### SPRINGFIELD TOWN CENTER BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE

Springfield Town Center is celebrating the upcoming academic year by encouraging our local community to "Pull Together!" Through a partnership with Big

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

Brothers Big Sisters of the National Capital Area, Springfield Town Center is hoping to set local students up for a successful school year by collecting school supply donations. From now through September 6, shoppers can drop off their donations of backpacks and assorted school

supplies for students in need. The donation bin is conveniently located in Grand Court on the Lower Level, donations can also be dropped off at the mall's Management or Security offices. Accepted donation items are: Backpacks (must be new, regular or

large sized, no mini backpacks or backpacks with wheels)  
1" binders  
Notebooks  
Ballpoint Pens (Black or Blue)  
No. 2 Pencils  
Crayons (24-ct)  
For more information on the Back To

School Donation Drive or Get Together event, visit [SpringfieldTownCenter.com](http://SpringfieldTownCenter.com).

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

GrandInvolve Seeks Volunteers. Would you like a unique and interesting volunteer experience to make a difference in a

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

# Affordable Housing

FROM PAGE 6

walk would be hundreds of thousands of dollars – which would be cost-prohibitive.”

But, continued Houston, “We’re going to add speedbumps, lighting and, possibly, high-visibility paint to add to Presbyterian Way’s visibility. And pedestrians can also use existing trails to reach Main Street, and trails going east and west go to Judicial Drive and Woodland Drive.”

As for the additional 38 parking spaces, he said, “The church has an aging population and needs more and better handicap parking, which the phase-two parking lot would provide. And [nearby] Fairfax Nursing Center has had a long relationship with the church and could also possibly use these spaces.”

Yi asked how the project has changed between 2018 and now, and Houston said the site plan is the same, but the buildings will be brick and three stories. “We’ve had to do traffic, archaeological and water studies and lots of research,” he said. “And we pulled the townhouses further back – from 15 to 35 feet – from the Cameron Glen neighborhood.”

Miller then thanked him for answering all the Council’s questions. Since this project hasn’t yet been officially approved, it will come before Council again for further updates and an eventual public hearing.

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

school, classroom, or in one child’s life? GrandInvolve.org facilitates rewarding, flexible adult volunteer opportunities at Fairfax County Title I elementary schools, providing classroom assistance with math, reading, and other simple educational tasks. Visit [www.GrandInvolve.org/volunteer-with-us](http://www.GrandInvolve.org/volunteer-with-us) for details and to complete an interest form. Or email [info@grandinvolve.org](mailto:info@grandinvolve.org).

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# Culinary Instruction Without Borders

**Virtual platform takes Melanie Underwood from Fairfax farm to nationwide classroom.**

By MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

It started with a pastry. Eight-year-old Melanie Underwood trudged through a grassy field in Northern Virginia in search of her father. Finding him on a tractor, she presented him with her latest masterpiece: a platter of eclairs, a confection that is both sinfully decadent and extraordinarily difficult for an elementary school student to master.

Decades later, Underwood, who is the youngest of six daughters, is helping her father celebrate his 81st birthday in Fairfax this week. She's no longer an enthusiastic novice serving dessert on a plate, but a licensed culinary arts instructor and founder of Gather, a school that allows her to share passion for food with others.

"An essential part of my class is teaching confidence, creativity and calm in the kitchen, along with technique," said Underwood. "Almost anyone can follow a recipe, but I help students to learn what to do if whatever they are making doesn't come out as expected."

Through virtual learning platforms that are still on trend post-COVID, Underwood has a worldwide classroom that reaches students from elementary school through retirement.

"Some students watch, and some students actively participate," she said. "I watch what everyone is doing and give feedback in real-time. I also answer any questions during this time. We discuss the techniques of what we are making and how to make substitutes. I encourage tasting

as we go and get students to talk about what they are tasting."

The name of her school is an homage to her grandparents and their tradition of gathering family and friends for meals made using ingredients like cream that was milked from cows on their farm and fruit grown on trees on their land.

"These were the building blocks to some unusual and delicious dinner and dessert offerings," said her sister Lori Page who lives in Fairfax. "Meals were not simply nourishment for the body ... they were also nourishing to the senses, to the soul. They were an event in many ways [and] something to look forward to. ... It's not a surprise that Melanie would grow up to cook and to develop recipes that use ingredients in non-traditional ways."

Underwood works to set an anxiety-free tone in her classes where whimsy is prioritized over perfection. Families stuck in a culinary rut with a repertoire of three dinner



PHOTO BY AIKO AUSTIN

**Culinary instructor Melanie Underwood teaches students to be courageous in the kitchen.**

recipes that they cook on repeat will get a boost of originality. Her students might learn to make chicken salad by swapping celery and mayonnaise for curry paste and arugula.

"We made homemade gnocchi, freely chatted about food and family, all while learning and practicing techniques together," said Joanna Dewey, who is one of Underwood's students. "I was so hesitant signing up for my first online cooking class [but] my fears of being judged or too inexperienced immediately dissipated."

Taped classes allow families to have culinary experiences that are not bound by hectic and often conflicting schedules.

"Now, my nine-year-old daughter and I catch any episodes she is hosting and enjoy baking her recipes together," said Dewey. "I'm already planning on giving her classes to family members, and also using them in the future to gather friends from all over the country for a virtual ladies night out."

Through classes that she creates specifically for children, Underwood uses a holistic approach to education and helps her young charges develop a palate that extends beyond chicken nuggets, French fries and juice boxes.

"I know the importance of designing classes to incorporate math, reading, critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity through the life skill of cooking while having fun," she said.

Her family's time-honored tradition of using food as a vehicle for community building and social connections guided the mission that Underwood established for Gather. "Cooking can break down all types of barriers and unite us all. I've repeatedly observed how learning to cook and bake enriches lives, connecting with friends, and family, creating community, and developing self-confidence."

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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper-local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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## Less Than Twenty-Four Hours Later



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Last week's patient has already had an unexpected bleeding event and has been transferred back to ICU. Now, the patient is in Medical ICU. Previously, he had been in Surgical ICU. (Incidentally, this hospital, I was told, has nine different ICUs.) And what's the difference between the two ICUs? So far as I can tell: one letter. MICU appears to be equally hands-on with 'round-the-clock super attentive care with an ever-present nurse and other related medical staff always within earshot and able as well to view the patient's status (heart rate, pulse, blood pressure, et cetera) on various monitors and computer screens. So, it's nice to be back (that's easy for me to say) in the loving and caring arms of the ICU. Although, I wish we were anywhere but here, if you know what I mean? But if I'm being selfish, I want this patient to receive the best care possible and in his present state, a 24-7 ICU offers his best chance of surviving.

Now we wait for the doctors to evaluate his condition and determine a course of action which addresses the bleeding that prompted his transfer back to an ICU in the first place. And in the second place, I can't help wondering if successive struggles like this and others that have occurred since his three-weeks ago emergency ambulance ride to the hospital, have had a cumulative effect and the more upsets/complications like this that the patient experiences, the greater the chance that this patient will succumb to the stresses placed on his body. But what do I know? No joke here. I'm a very interested party who's scared and extremely uncertain of the eventual outcome. It's a day-to-day existence for all of us. Unsettling doesn't begin to describe it.

The problem/reality is that the doctors don't know about tomorrow until they evaluate the information gathered today as well as assess the patient's overall progress/appearance. Monitoring the patient's behavior combined with having gathered a wide range of medical data will help determine, maybe overnight, after us interested parties have long since left the facility, what the plan is going forward, at least until the staff repeats today's orders and gathers even more data. As I've learned recently, medicine is not like arithmetic, there are no straight lines of treatment. There's an endless list of variables. As we've seen/been told, assessing the patient, and planning a course of action is dependent on any number of moving parts, so to speak, especially with this patient.

Twice now, medical emergencies have occurred which has postponed treatment of the underlying problem which was the reason this whole medical mess devolved. A little bit of chemo leading to a nearly non-existent white blood count caused this patient to be susceptible to infection with limited means to defend himself. He went into septic shock as a result and the hospital has spent the last three weeks trying to stabilize/regain control of the patient's major organs which had all shut down due to the sepsis.

Through all this tumult, the patient has been unable to talk due to tubes in his mouth from a ventilator initially, progressing to a trach tube in his throat (a tracheotomy needed to be performed) currently. Consequently, he has been unable to express his wishes, share his frustration or interact too much, even with his doctors. All he can do is mouth words and/or communicate with his eyes, facial gestures, and hand-arm movements. It's been challenging. More so, for him, than us. Since we don't know what the future holds, we'd really like to have greater communication in the present. Nevertheless, we must focus on how much better he is today than he was just last week. As The Three Stooges said: "Rome wasn't built in a day. Neither was Milwaukee."

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.



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